

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 014392

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, HO, ES

SUBJECT: HONDURAS/EL SALVADOR: COMMITTEE OF SEVEN MEETS

1. THE COMMITTEE OF SEVEN MET JANUARY 17 AND 21 AND DECIDED TO SEND A CONFIDENTIAL TELEGRAPHIC MEMORANDUM TO THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF EL SALVADOR AND HONDURAS. THE MEMO RECOMMENDS THAT THE TWO GOVERNMENTS JOIN TOGETHER TO REVISE THE ACT OF WASHINGTON QTE IN ANY WAY THEY DEEM NECESSARY, AND ESPECIALLY TO EXTEND THE PERIOD IN WHICH THESE ACCORDS ARE IN EFFECT UNQTE. IT SUGGESTS A SIX-MONTH EXTENSION OF THE ACT. IT ALSO INVITES THE TWO FOREIGN MINISTERS TO COME TO WASHINGTON IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO WORK OUT A REVISION OF THE ACT OF WASHINGTON. IF THE TWO PARTIES DESIRE, THE COMMITTEE OF SEVEN WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS OR CLARIFY THIS PROPOSAL WITH THE OAS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TWO COUNTRIES OR, ALTERNATELY, WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS IT IN THE TWO CAPITALS.

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2. IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE EL SALVADOR'S DESIRE FOR DELAY, THE MEMO SUGGESTS THAT THE REVISION BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN AGREEMENT, EXPRESS OR IMPLICIT, THAT THE NEXT MEETING TAKE PLACE IN APRIL. IN ORDER TO MEET HONDURAN CONCERNS ON THE BORDER ISSUE, THE MEMO SUGGESTS THAT EL SALVADOR WOULD, PRIOR TO THE MEETING IN APRIL, INFORM HONDURAS OF THE SALVADORAN QTE POINT OF VIEW UNQTE ON THE BORDER.

3. THE MEMO, DRAFTED PRINCIPALLY BY ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR

QUIJANO, HAS A GOOD DEAL OF ART ABOUT IT. IT ELIMINATES ANY REFERENCE TO MEXICO AS NECESSARILY THE VENUE OF FUTURE TALKS (AS NOW REQUIRED BY THE ACT). IT IS VAGUE ON JUST HOW MUCH QTE POINT OF VIEW UNQTE ON THE BORDER EL SALVADOR SHOULD GIVE. THE APRIL DATE FOR BEGINNING THE TALKS IS PAST THE SALVADORAN ELECTIONS, AND THE SIX-MONTH EXTENSION WOULD PRESUMABLY TERMINATE IN LATE JULY, WHICH IS FAR ENOUGH IN ADVANCE OF NOVEMBER (WHEN EL SALVADOR'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE PACT OF BOGOTA EXPIRES) SO THAT HONDURAS SHOULD NOT FEEL ITS OPTIONS ARE BEING CLOSED.

4. THE DECISION TO SEND THE MEMO WAS TAKEN DESPITE A REALIZATION THAT THE CENTRAL AMERICAN PRESIDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO MEET IN NICARAGUA IN EARLY FEBRUARY TO DISCUSS THE QUESTION. CHAIRMAN SEVILLA SACASA AND OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS SAID THE INVITATION TO RENEW THE ACT OF WASHINGTON OFFERED A TOOL WHICH THE GOVERNMENTS OF HONDURAS AND EL SALVADOR COULD USE OR NOT, AS THEY SAW FIT.

5. THE U.S. AND GUATEMALAN DELEGATES POINTED OUT SEVERAL DEFECTS IN THE EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS, PARTICULARLY ITS FORMALISM AND THE PASSIVE ROLE ASSUMED BY THE COORDINATOR AT THE MEETING IN MEXICO. AS A RESULT OF SUGGESTIONS BY THE U.S. AND GUATEMALAN DELEGATES THE SCOPE OF THE MEMO WAS BROADENED CONSIDERABLY TO ALLOW ANY CHANGES (VENUE, MODUS OPERANDI) IN THE ARRANGEMENTS TO WHICH EL SALVADOR AND HONDURAS MAY JOINTLY AGREE.

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6. THE COMMITTEE ALSO NOTED TWO CABLES FROM BATRES RESPONDING TO THE DENUNCIATION OF THE TWO RECENT FATAL BORDER CLASHES. COPIES ARE BEING POUCHED TO TEGUCIGALPA AND SAN SALVADOR.

7. COMMENT: U.S. DELEGATES HAD EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE RESERVATIONS ABOUT CLINGING TO THE FORMAL ARRANGEMENTS EMBODIED IN THE ACT OF WASHINGTON, WHEN THESE HAD PRO-

DUCED SUCH AN UNSATISFACTORY CONCLUSION. BUT THE REVISIONS
OF THE MEMO TOOK CARE OF MOST OF OUR CONCERNS. BOTH
CHAIRMAN SEVILLA SACASA AND GUATEMALAN AMBASSADOR
CASTILLO INDICATED THAT A PROPERLY WORDED MEMO FROM THE
COMMITTEE WOULD NOT HINDER, AND MIGHT HELP, THE PLANS
FOR A SECRET CENTRAL AMERICAN MEETING OF PRESIDENTS .
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